

## ELEANOR PALMER PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Minutes of the Full Governing Body Meeting Held on 25 November 2020

#### Apologies received:

##### LB Camden

Boris Telyatnikov

##### Parent

Charlie Condou  
Flora Cornish  
Christophe Frèrebeau  
Rifca Le Dieu  
Nanouche Umeadi

##### Staff

Kate Frod, Head teacher  
Lacey Cousins – staff governor

##### Co-opted

Jennifer Allan – Chair of Governors  
Shanti Fricker  
Tim Peake  
Matthew Lawrence

##### Associate members

Sally Hill  
Natalie Stevenson  
Rosie Thomson

#### Also present:

Tania Voaden, Clerk

The meeting was held via remote video conference.

**1.00** There were no declarations of interest.

#### **1.2 Corrections and matters arising**

Lacey Cousins not shown as attending as Staff Governor.

#### **1.3 Actions**

**Items 2.3, 2.6 and 6.0** completed.

**Item 4.0** – Christophe Frerebeau to update on new supporters for Keep it EP. Update will be shared at Resources and PPC Committee.

**Item 4.1** Resources Committee to share historical programme of works. **Rollover** to spring meeting.

#### **2.00 Transition Plans**

**2.1** The Chair congratulated Natalie Stevenson and Sally Hill on their appointment as headteachers. She expressed delight at the appointments and noted the luxury of time for transition and handover of headship. She reminded Governors of their responsibilities in supporting this transition and challenged them to consider their roles in this.

- **ACTION** Chairs of committee to consider necessary preparation and planning for smooth transition and to discuss in committee.

**2.2** The Head noted that discussions were taking place with the new Heads, and that they already played a huge part in decision making in the school. She remarked that the transition was not an event, but an evolving process and that the goal was to make it as seamless as possible. Consideration was being given to areas of less experience and in building acquisition of knowledge and understanding in these areas. For example, Sally Hill had not been part of the Resources Committee previously and was keen to know more. She has arranged a meeting with the committee Chair this week to review. The Head also reminded Governors that Natalie Stevenson, whilst fully involved in all planning and transition discussions, was still on maternity leave.

**2.3** The Chair said there would need to be shared understanding of how co-headship would work, who was responsible for what and when. She proposed a working group on transition. Rifca Le Dieu said that she did was very experienced in flexible working and recommended the resources available through Timewise, a flexible working consultancy.

**2.4** The Head informed Governors that there was no Camden employment contract for a headteacher job share and noted that the school was again pioneering! She thanked Governors that the recruitment process had been very professional, rigorous and that staff had felt very involved. Tim Peake commended the children who participated. Charlie Condou questioned whether the job was two roles and the Head replied that it was one role, which needed further modelling. A key next step would be looking to appoint a deputy. The Chair minded that this would be done in consideration to reduction of income.

Christophe Frerebeau asked whether Sally Hill would continue as SENDco. Sally Hill responded that she would like to continue to oversee SEN and would certainly be involved in training anyone into the role. Christophe Frerebeau said that parents of SEN children would inevitably have questions about the change of role. The Head reminded Governors that she held the position of Head and SENDco for many years.

**2.5** Lacey Cousins read a letter from the school teaching team which thanked Governors for their consultation and communication during the Headteacher recruitment process. The Chair acknowledged the letter with thanks, and also gave appreciation to the welcome given by the school staff.

### **3.00 HEADTEACHER'S REPORT**

The Head's report 25 November 2021 was shared with Governors in advance of the meeting.

#### **3.1 Covid update**

The Head had provided a detailed Covid update in her report. Two class 'bubbles' had been sent home mid-November and she noted the inevitable negative impact of disruption in learning. The issue was not simply around technology, even with the loan of chromebooks, some families did not engage in the provision. As the home learning was due to contact with a positive case, there was not the option to bring the more vulnerable children into school. The impact was most significant for disadvantaged children. The Head commended the staff teams for their organisation and swift response to lockdown. She noted too how teachers were directly engaging with the harder to reach families.

**3.2** The Head updated Governors about how funding for the tutoring programme was being used. She noted that the response from local agencies had been poor. Utilising links with Tim Coulson, ex-Camden Schools Director, who now had an agency in Suffolk, she had been able to gain dispensation to access tutoring hours at a greatly reduced rate.

The Head expressed frustration that Covid could become a byword for mediocrity in education. In looking at future online provision the school was considering what most added value.

**3.3** Governors and staff expressed disappointment at the cancellation of the usual activities at the close of the autumn term with current Covid restrictions. In particular the absence of the usual Christmas Concert and 'EP's got Talent'. The Head said that staff were planning to organise Christmas Carols within class and linking between classrooms via zoom.

#### **3.3 Curriculum**

The Head stressed the value of the CPD sessions with The Black Curriculum and said that several staff had attended the first session with the Anti-Racist Hub. Next steps would be looking at the long-term curriculum plan and for greater depth of study than single assemblies. The Head said that the

school wanted to move towards becoming 'changemakers' and practice allyship encouraging children to notice, step in and speak up. Whilst these ideas were founded in discussions around race, they had value in terms of all equalities and social and environmental change.

The Head remarked that she was delighted that all Year 6 children had taken part in recent Primary Maths Challenge. This was the first time an entire class had participated, and whilst pleased that the school had multiple medal winners, the Head was most proud of the confidence and enthusiasm with which Year 6 had all participated.

### **3.4 Teaching School**

The Head reminded Governors that the decision around Teaching Schools would be made in January. The school hoped for partnership work from this as it was part of two bids for regional hubs. There had been some strong applications for the next intake of School Direct.

### **3.5 Special Needs**

[REDACTED]

### **3.6 Finance**

The Head noted the 6<sup>th</sup> year of deferral for the National Funding Formula

### **3.7 Extended Schools**

In her report the Head shared attendance data for Breakfast Club and Club EP. Breakfast Club is not currently breaking even, no doubt due to the numbers of parents working from home or with more flexible working patterns since Covid. This loss is offset by Club EP which is thriving, though hit by the closure of class bubbles.

### **3.8 Attendance**

The Head shared attendance data in her report. She noted that usually this term is marked with absence due to colds, but with frequent handwashing and greater distancing, there had been very good attendance.

### **3.9 Visits and Special Events**

The Parents' Evening under the new booking system had worked well, a more equitable model and with 100% engagement. This method of booking will remain 'post-Covid'. Staff have been considering what other changes should be retained, such as the classroom layout and pencil cases.

## **4.00 SPECIAL ITEM – A Data Retrospective**

The Head shared a presentation looking at school data over time. Usually, this meeting is a review of the school's annual data, but in the absence of national figures this year, Governors had asked to see a broader representation of data, to reflect changes in the school over the period of Headship.

Some of the detail and discussion from the slides in summary below:

- **Gender** – The school had a sustained period with boys outnumbering girls, rising to 64% boys in 2007/8. In more recent years the number of girls is in the ascendancy, with the balance now to girls with 57% of the roll.
- **Free School Meals** – The Head noted that the school was 36% FSM at the start of her headship. This took a downward trend even before the Ofsted 'Outstanding' and now hovered around 10%. The % Pupil Premium children in the school sits below the Camden, London and national average. This reflects the demographic of the immediate area. The current Nursery class had 27% FSM, so may buck the trend! The Head shared a graph showing Camden schools FSM %, the average of which is 31%. The wide variance of FSM shown on this graph reflects the diversity within the borough.
- **Pupil Premium** -In 2011, the Lib Dems put focus on the gap in obtaining expected standards for FSM children when compared to non-FSM children. The phrase Pupil Premium was introduced and 6 years' worth of associated funding given to schools, even if the FSM eligibility ceased. The school had already started to look at the disparity from 2009, when there was a stark 57% combined subject attainment gap. 'Closing the gap' has ever since remained on the schools SDP. The Head shared FSM gap attainment data since 2009, demonstrating substantial progress that has been made. In 2011 the school had introduced

the 'Extra Mile' project. The principle was that for each disadvantaged child the school 'did what it takes' to support learning. Ideas introduced then such as 1:1 tuition, home visits and special support made a substantial difference in attainment and the school now does these as standard. The Head commended the work of the Curriculum Committee in honing in on supporting disadvantaged children and in keeping cultural capital on the agenda.

- **Ethnicity** -Several slides were shared showing the ethnic diversity of the school both historically and in the context to Camden, London and nationally. The largest ethnic group at the school remains white British at 40% pupils (Camden 24%, London 25%, national 65%), though this is much smaller % than previously.
- The % EAL and BAME children were shown by class and evidenced some of the considerable variances between year groups. The Head noted that % EAL children sits around 40% in recent years.
- **Attendance** – The Head shared an attendance graph over time which showed marked improvement. The aforementioned 'Extra Mile' project created a seismic shift in pupil premium attendance clearly shown on the graph. Children clearly wanting to be in school. From 2015-2018 the school had the lowest % of absence on the borough.
- Christophe Frerebeau proposed creating benchmarks to help make comparisons and set realistic goals for the school. The Head responded that with 30 children per class, the size of cohort was not large enough to make benchmarking statistically meaningful.
- **Key Stage results** – The Head shared several slides on Key Stage results over time. She noted that the results had always been respectable, but that the school had got better at 'adding value', ie progress had improved. Interestingly the value added was never significantly better than the Camden or national picture. The school has consistently had high attainers numbering greater than Camden and national %. Reading attainment in the school has also been invariably good.
- **Reading** -The Head shared results of Suffolk reading tests in graph form. In 2005 33% children in Year 5 had a reading age below chronological age. In 2020 this was 4% (equating to 1 child). 41% current Year 6 read at the highest stanine in the test, this compares to 4% nationally. The Head stated that the school 'makes readers!' And that this is more than phonics and book recommendations. The Head said that the school intentionally uses ambitious language, citing for example that children had just learned about pluralism in assembly. The school was purposeful in encouraging talk and discussions, in learning about 'stuff', and expanding vocabulary.
- **Writing**- the school is starting to have longitudinal data around Comparative Judgement assessments on writing. A slide shared showed progress since 2019 for current Year 3.
- **Maths**- the consistent assessment over the headship has been the times table test in Year 4. The Head shared data from the Year 4 test in 2011-12 and July 2020. Evidence that knowledge of times tables is much more robust now in upper Juniors.
- **Inclusion**- The Head shared historical SEN data and current. The school has traditionally had more children with additional needs than the local or national picture. Currently 3.8% pupils have EHCP, compared to 2.6% Camden, 2.4% London and 1.8% nationally. Excluding children with a resource provision the school has 14% children with SEN, lower than the Camden average.
- **Mobility** – the school has always benefitted from stability, with few families leaving.
- The Head shared links for financial benchmarking and recommended that Governors use them to drill down into data.
- Sally Hill commented that she had been at the school throughout the period reviewed and that the school had transformed in so many ways for the positive. A very different place.
- The Head asked that Governors maintain focus on Year 1, a cohort with a complex range of needs and also Year 3, with a wide stretch of attainment.

Unfortunately the internet connection was unstable through the presentation. The Head said that she would share the slides with Governors after the meeting to enable them to review in more detail and to follow up with any questions.

- **ACTION** –Shared Data Retrospective slides. Done.

## **5.00 STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Minutes dated 12 November were shared ahead of the meeting.

**5.1** The Committee had discussed the reports from the NQT review and whole staff meeting and further review date meetings planned.

**5.2** Shanti Fricker and Vicky Green had met to review the Safeguarding Checklist in October. Shanti Fricker noted that this was now a very thorough checklist. Minutes shared with papers.

The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy with Covid annex was approved by the committee.

- **ACTION** safeguarding policy added to website. **Done.**

**3.3** Shanti Fricker challenged how the school was managing with a reduction in teaching assistants and with Annie Fair leaving. The Head responded that the bulk of the pupil caseload covered by Annie Fair had left the school, but that Angela Ross had increased her hours to provide additional support. Rosie Thomson also assists top Juniors along with Jenny Hansford who provides some 1:1 support.

## **6.00 RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of meeting dated 5 November 2020 were shared in advance of the meeting.

**6.1** Tim Peake said that finances had been reviewed in light of the new Heads' appointments. He noted also that the new Heads had already put forward some premises proposals.

**6.2** Rifca Le Dieu challenged how the school would manage a drop in income and reducing expenditure to counterbalance. Tim Peake countered that there was not a complete shut down in funding, and some can be picked up in other forms. He noted that there is also some cushion of funding, but the committee were mindful of over-commitment.

## **7.00 PPC COMMITTEE**

Minutes dated 11 November 2020 were shared ahead of the meeting.

**7.1** The Year 5 and 6 BAME pupil groups are meeting every two weeks and the children have joined these meetings with great enthusiasm. Governors will meet with the pupil groups in December. Parent groups had not yet started as these would need to be via zoom and the committee thought it better to wait for the opportunity to meet in person.

Nanouche Umeadi had approached Keir Starmer's office and arranged for him to visit EP to learn about the work the school was doing on racial literacy and decolonising the curriculum.

**7.2** Sally Hill has had useful 1:1 meetings with parents of SEN children and had shared feedback with committee. Post- lockdown there will be planned coffee mornings for these families.

**7.3** Zoom session for parents around online safety and child mental health would be taking place in December. Matthew Lawrence asked whether Governors could register to join a session.

- **ACTION** to share the zoom links to register. **Done**

## **8.0 CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**

Minutes dated 4 November were shared ahead of the meeting.

The committee had met before there had been necessity to close class bubbles. The Head's update in the minutes therefore did not reflect this.

They reviewed the Remote Learning Policy.

- **ACTION** Finalised and added to website. **Done.**

## **9.00 AOB**

None.

The meeting ended at 19.35pm

## **POLICIES AGREED**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Remote Learning Policy